

The Persecution of the Church 37

ian survive."* Then, when they caught sight of Hermogeniarms, the city pmeffect, they called ten times over to the Emperor, " May you conquer, Augustus! Ask the pmeffect what it is we are shouting." Such a scene was natural enough in the Circus of Rome; was it typical of the Empire? Doubtless in all the great cities, such as Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Carthage, the " baser sort" would be quite ready to shout, " Away with the Christians/* But it is to be remembered that we find no trace anywhere in this persecution of a massacre on the scale of that of St. Bartholomew or the Sicilian Vespers. On the contrary, we see that though the prisons were full, the relations of the Christians were usually allowed to visit them, take them food, and listen to their exhortations. Pamphilus of Gusarca, who was in jail for two years, not only received his friends during that period, but was able to go on making copies of the Scriptures !

We rarely hear of the courts being packed with anti-Christian crowds, or of the judges being incited by popular clamour to pass the death sentence. The reports of the trials shew us silent, orderly courts, with the judges anxious not so much to condemn to death as to make a convert. If Diocletian had wanted blood he could have had it in rivers, not in streams. But he did not* lie wished to eradicate what he believed to be an impious, mischievous, and, from the point of view of the State's security, a dangerous superstition. There was no talk of per-

* *CJiristiiuri folUmtur ft vvhtptas cmnstut; /Nr capnt A i/^w/i (V&/'/.v« tiani twñ ,v/w/.*